

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5579

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 18846

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, US

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF JEWISH ACTIVIST ON SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION

REF: MOSCOW 18768

1. LEADING SOVIET JEWISH ACTIVIST TOLD EMBOFF DECEMBER 19 THAT HE AGREED WITH SENATOR JACKSON'S REMARKS, BRAODCAST ON VOA, THAT TASS STATEMENT AND RELEASE OF GROMYKO LETTER ON TRADE BILL AND EMIGRATION WAS "FACE-SAVING" DEVICE. HE FELT THAT PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS HAD NOT CHANGED SITUATION MUCH AND SAID LATER SOVIET ACTIONS WOULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN WORDS. HE TENDED TO THINK THAT SOVIETS WOULD MAKE SOME SORT OF A GESTURE, PERHAPS BY GIVING EXIT PERMISSION TO "TWENTY OR SO" JEWISH ACTIVISTS. HE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT "THEY HAVE NO REASON TO KEEP US". SOURCE REITERATED POSITION OF MOST MOSCOW JEWISH ACTIVISTS--THAT NUMBERS PER SE ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT TO JEWISH INTELLECTUALS WHO WISH TO EMIGRATE AS A CESSATION OF HARASSMENT AND PERSECUTION. IF NUMBERS ARE EMPHASIZED, HE SAID, SOVIETS CAN EASILY "FILL QUOTA" BY ENCOURAGING EMIGRATION OF RURAL GEORGIAN, UKRAINIANAN AND "BUKHARA" JEWS.

2. SOURCE STATED THAT SOME OF HIS FRIENDS ORIGINALLY TOOK OPPOSITE VIEW ON MEANING OF PUBLICATION OF THE TASS STATEMENT AND GROMYKO LETTER WHEN THEY HEARD REPORTS ON VOA AND OTHER FOREIGN RADIOS, AND WERE "RUNNING AROUND IN PANIC". THEY ARE NOW CALMED DOWN SOMEWHAT BUT ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT WHETHER PUBLICATION OF SOVIET POSITION ON EMIGRATION WILL MEAN A CHANGE FOR THE WORSE.

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3. SOURCE ALSO SAID SOME IN JEWISH ACTIVIST CIRCLES THOUGHT

PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS MAY HAVE BEEN "FOR THE ARABS" IN LIGHT OF
THE FAHMY STATEMENT AND THE FORTHCOMING BREZHNEV TRIP TO EGYPT.
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